

US6141611: Mobile vehicle accident data system

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Abstract:

One or more video cameras are mounted on the vehicle to make continuously a visual record of the scene in a region around the vehicle. Camera images during a time interval covering the current time and the recent past are stored on-board the vehicle, preferably, digitally recorded in a compressed format. In addition, data (e.g. one or more operating parameters such as speed, GPS data, engine, and/or brake operating parameters) from the vehicle's on-board embedded computers covering the present and recent past interval are also preferably digitally stored on-board the vehicle. An accident detector or detectors on-board the vehicle, for example a biaxial accelerometer, generate a trigger signal in response to an accident, such as the vehicle striking something or being struck by another vehicle. In response to an accident detector trigger signal, the data stored on-board the vehicle is automatically transmitted over a wireless link (e.g. public access links such as CDPD, satellite and Iridium or a private link) to a central data base. Data in the central data base is connected by a digital data network such as the Internet or a secured intranet and the data can be accessed via a computer terminal of an authorized party, such as an insurance adjuster for the company providing coverage to the vehicle, a self-insured entity, or a loss management facility.

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What is claimed is:

Having thus described our invention, what we claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is as follows:

1. A method for capturing vehicular accident data and automatically making it available to authorized parties including the steps of:

- recording and storing data significant to the operation of said vehicle in a memory on-board said vehicle, said data including video data of a scene external to said vehicle, sensing the involvement of said vehicle in an accident,
- in response to said accident sensed in said sensing step, automatically encrypting said data and automatically transmitting said encrypted data to a data storage server remote from said vehicle over a wireless transmission link;
- wherein said encrypted data is recorded and stored to cover an interval preceding and following an accident.